

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 IO-14 AID-20 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 AGR-20

SAM-01 SAB-01 DRC-01 /160 W
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R 200940Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4337

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD VIA POUCH

S E C R E T DACCA 4267

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, BG

SUBJ: MUJIB'S OPPONENTS: DREAMERS AND SCHEMERS

REF: DACCA 3954

1. THE FIRST EFFORT OF THE NATIONAL SOCIALIST PARTY (JSD) SINCE THE LIFTING OF SECTION 144 TO RALLY POPULAR SENTIMENT AGAINST SHEIKH MUJIB'S GOVERNMENT WAS UNIMPRESSIVE, EVEN DISCOUNTING THE EFFECTS OF INTERMITTENT RAIN ON THE SIZE OF THE CROWD. DESPITE THE GATHERING CLOUDS OVERHEAD AT PALTAN MAIDAN SEPTEMBER 14, JSD LEADERSHIP APPEARED MORE INTERESTED IN EGO-TRIPPING THEIR WAY THROUGH TWO HOURS OF IDEOLOGICAL RHETORIC THAN IN MOVING PROMPTLY TO MOBILIZE MODEST CROWD OF ONE THOUSAND OR SO FOR THE PROCESSION MEANT TO CLIMAX THE MEETING. CONSEQUENTLY, A DOWNPOUR FINALLY CUT SHORT SPEECHES, SENT MAJORITY OF CROWD WHO APPEARED TO BE SATURDAY IDLERS DASHING FOR COVER, AND LEFT 200-PLUS DRENCHED JSD YOUTH TO CARRY PARTY BANNERS INTO THE STREETS.

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2. SATURDAY'S PERFORMANCE DOES NOTHING TO ALLAY DOUBTS ABOUT THE

JSD'S EFFECTIVENESS. THE PARTY APPEARS NEITHER TO HAVE LEARNED ANYTHING FROM ITS PREVIOUS FAILURES TO AROUSE POPULAR SENTIMENT NOR TO HAVE FOUND A STRATEGY FOR CAPITALIZING ON THE MISERY AND DISCONTENT RESULTING FROM FOOD SHORTAGES AND DIZZILY RISING PRICES. WE DOUBT THAT SATURDAY'S GATHERING IMPRESSED THE REPORTED MILITARY CONSPIRATORS WHO ARE SAID TO BE LOOKING TO JSD TO PRECIPITATE A POLITICAL UPHEAVAL TO FACILITATE A COUP (REFTEL). HOWEVER, WE SUSPECT THAT THE MILITARY PLOTTERS MIGHT BE USING JSD AS A STALKING HORSE AND HENCE CANNOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THEY MAY BE CONSIDERING ALTERNATIVE PLANS AS WELL.

3. JSD'S EFFORT, EVEN IF FOOTLESS, IS NOT THE ONLY MANIFESTATION OF WIDESPREAD CONCERN THAT ECONOMIC SITUATION AND DECLINING REPUTATION OF THE GOVERNMENT MUST RESULT IN PUBLIC STIRRINGS, IF NOT UPHEAVAL, OF SOME KIND SOON, PERHAPS AFTER THE MONTH OF RAMADAN WHICH BEGAN HERE SEPTEMBER 18. OF CONSIDERABLE SIGNIFICANCE IS THE SCURRYING ABOUT WITHIN THE AWAMI LEAGUE ITSELF. DISSATISFACTION WITH MUJIB'S RULE HAS BEEN EVIDENT FOR SOME TIME AMONG MANY AWAMI LEAGUERS, PARTICULARLY THE SECOND GENERATION LEADERSHIP AND THE MORE MODERATE ELDERS. BUT NOW AWAMI LEAGUERS APPEAR TO BE RUNNING SCARED, IMPELLED BY TWO FEARS. FIRST IS THE CONCERN THAT THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS WILL BE THE UNDOING OF THE AWAMI LEAGUE AND THAT THEY WILL GO DOWN WITH THE PARTY. SECOND IS THE FEAR THAT MUJIB'S RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS WILL BE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AUTHORITARIAN GOVERNMENT THAT WILL PROVE UNACCEPTABLE NOT ONLY TO THE OPPOSITION BUT ALSO TO THE RANK AND FILE OF THE AWAMI LEAGUE WHO WILL BE DEPRIVED OF EVEN THE LIMITED VOICE THEY NOW HAVE IN THE DIRECTION OF GOVERNMENT.

4. ALTHOUGH THESE AWAMI LEAGUERS ARE INCREASINGLY AND OPENLY IDENTIFYING MUJIB AS THEIR MAIN PROBLEM, THEY DO NOT YET PROFESS TO SEE A REAL POLITICAL ALTERNATIVE. THEY ARE WELL AWARE OF THE RUMORS OF COMING POLITICAL AND POPULAR CHALLENGES TO THE GOVERNMENT AND OF THE POTENTIAL FOR MILITARY INTERVENTION. BUT THEY CHOOSE TO STRESS THAT THE ALTERNATIVE TO CHAOS IS A CHANGE IN POLICY FROM ONE OF "BUILDING SOCIALISM" TO A MORE PRAGMATIC, INCENTIVE-ORIENTED EFFORT TO CURE THE ILLS OF THE COUNTRY. THEIR CONCERNS MAY BE LARGELY SELF-SERVING, I.E., A SEARCH FOR WAYS TO SAVE SOMETHING FOR THEMSELVES SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT BE TOPPLED OR TO AVOID BEING CUT OUT OF ANY ROLE AT ALL THROUGH THE ESTABLISH-
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MENT BY MUJIB OF A NARROW RULING CLIQUE.

5. WHATEVER THEIR MOTIVES--AND WE HAVE CHOSEN TO DESCRIBE THEM HERE IN THE MOST CYNICAL LIGHT--THESE RUMBLINGS FORCE US TO CONSIDER WHETHER SOME AWAMI LEAGUERS ARE BEGINNING TO CAST ABOUT FOR WAYS TO SHORE UP, IF NOT THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PARTY AS PRESENTLY CONSTITUTED, AT LEAST THEIR OWN POWER BASES. OUR INDICATIONS ARE SPARSE AND RANDOM. NEVERTHELESS, COMMENTS TO US

SUGGEST AN EFFORT BY A FEW AWAMI LEAGUERS AT THE VERY LEAST TO
DISTANCE THEMSELVES FROM MUJIB, WHO THEY NOW SEE IN DANGER OF

LEADING THE NATION INTO CATASTROPHE JUST AS HE ONCE INSPIRED IT
TO LIBERATION.

BOSTER

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